

November 9, 2007

**Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
Hearing on HR 415, the Taunton Wild and Scenic River Act (October 30, 2007)
Supplemental Information of Congressman Barney Frank**

Mr. Chairman, I appreciated having the opportunity to testify on October 30 before the subcommittee in support of the Taunton Wild and Scenic River Act (H.R. 415), legislation I introduced with the entire membership of both the Massachusetts and Rhode Island House delegations to include the Taunton River in the Wild and Scenic system. While the question of the potential impact of this legislation on the Liquefied Natural Gas facility that has been proposed for a site on the river in the city of Fall River, Massachusetts was addressed in my written statement and also came up during my testimony, there are two additional aspects of this question that I thought it would be helpful to include in the record. Accordingly, I ask that this supplemental information be included in the record of the hearing.

One of the points that arose in the hearing was whether H.R. 415 was an attempt to prevent any type of development along the Taunton River in Fall River. Nothing could be further from the truth. Along with my colleague Rep. McGovern and the two Massachusetts Senators, I have worked with municipal officials on several development proposals that are aimed at beginning to convert the riverfront into an area that would offer increased tourism and recreational opportunities. Specifically, in the Department of Transportation appropriations bills for Fiscal Years 2002 – 2005 my colleagues and I secured some \$6.5 million for initial design work and eventual construction of an ambitious plan to lower Route 79 – currently an elevated highway – to ground level and convert it into a boulevard style roadway. This change would have the effect of opening up the waterfront area to alternative development, including such features as a boardwalk, hotel, restaurants, and a marina. This project is still in the early planning stages, but it is a demonstration of the fact that there is strong local support – which I share – for the idea of development in the area that is less industrial in nature.

Secondly, with regard to the timing of the efforts to expand the Wild and Scenic study to include the lower Taunton River, I would reiterate that this was not done with the LNG proposal in mind, and the bill's potential impact on that proposal should not be used as an argument against the bill. Nonetheless, because the question was raised, I believe it is important to be as accurate as possible about the timing. As stated in my written testimony, the formal request to expand the study was submitted by my colleagues and me to the National Park Service on September 12, 2002. However, my involvement in the proposed study expansion actually began well before that. Around the time of a February 15, 2002 announcement by

the Taunton River Watershed (a Massachusetts State Government entity) that it was initiating an effort to include the lower portion of the river in the Wild and Scenic study, I met with interested parties in my office in Bridgewater, Massachusetts and informed them that I would be supportive of that effort if the affected communities agreed to be included in the expanded study. The supporters of the expansion spent the next several months working to obtain the necessary approvals from the relevant communities, a process that was completed in August, after which I was formally notified by the Watershed on September 6, 2002. As stated in my earlier testimony, Congressmen McGovern and Lynch then joined me on September 12 in writing to the Park Service to request the study expansion. Then, on January 11, 2007, following an initial determination by the National Park Service that designation of the full river was the "preferred alternative", I introduced H.R. 415.

With regard to the LNG proposal, my office was initially contacted by representatives of the company proposing the facility on January 29, 2002, when a member of my District Office staff in Fall River was briefed on the plan. In response to that briefing, I wrote to the company that I appreciated being given the information, and that I would be "strongly inclined to follow the lead of the municipality involved." In this case, of course, the municipality is Fall River, and when, as the LNG proposal took shape, it became clear that a significant majority of residents and local elected officials opposed the project, I joined them in that opposition. It is clear from this timeline that, while initial discussions of the LNG proposal may have begun during the same general period that the efforts to expand the study were starting, there was, again, no link initially between the two. Thus, to the extent that a Wild and Scenic designation of the entire Taunton River would have an impact on the LNG proposal, that is a supplemental benefit -- albeit a positive one in my view -- but not one that was originally envisioned at the time the study expansion was first broached.

Copies of documents relating to the timeline are attached.

UNITED FRANK
4TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

2262 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2104
(202) 225-5931

29 CRAFTS STREET
- SUITE 375
NEWTON, MA 02458
(617) 332-3920

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

February 5, 2002

556 PLEASANT STREET
ROOM 319
NEW BEDFORD, MA 0274
(508) 999-4462

222 MILLIKEN PLACE
THIRD FLOOR
FALL RIVER, MA 02721
(508) 674-2551

89 MAIN STREET
BRIDGEWATER, MA 02324
(508) 897-4403

Ms. Judith Iwanski, Senior Vice President
& Mr. James A. Grasso, President & CEO
The Grasso Group, LLC
17 Avery Square
Needham, Massachusetts 02494

Dear Ms. Iwanski & Mr. Grasso,

Lisa Lowney of my Fall River office passed along the memo you left with her and a summary of your conversation. I appreciate your giving me this early notification. On matters such as this, I am strongly inclined to follow the lead of the municipality involved, so I obviously will be interested in what the city of Fall River has to say. But it is important for me to be informed about this so I thank you for initiating that process.


BARNEY FRANK

WEAVER'S COVE ENERGY

Weaver's Cove Energy Preliminary Project Outline January 2002

(DISCUSSION DRAFT ONLY)

- Note:** The project is in its infancy. This outline is a preliminary representation for discussion purposes only. A conceptual layout is underway, however, details of the project can not be determined until after extensive discussions with appropriate officials/agencies and considerable local and technical input.
- Project Description:** To develop a liquefied natural gas marine import terminal in the city of Fall River, Massachusetts.
- The facility will receive LNG that has been transported by ship. The liquid gas would then be transferred to a storage tank. When needed, the liquid gas will be removed from the storage tank, heated back into its vapor form (natural gas) and injected into the existing pipeline system. (Fall River Gas Co. has operated an LNG tank and vaporization system in the city for many years).
- The siting, design, construction, and operations of the proposed facility are regulated by numerous federal agencies including the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), Department of Transportation (DOT) and the US Coast Guard (USCG).
- Project Need:** The New England region has traditionally had limited access to natural gas, the cleanest burning fossil fuel. Further, gas demand in Fall River and Southeastern Massachusetts, especially for power generation, continues to grow while gas supply to the area is very constrained.
- Project Sponsor:** Weaver's Cove Energy is a wholly-owned affiliate of Potomac & Partners, Inc. ("Potomac") [website: www.potomac.com]
- Project Location:** The proposed site is located on the eastern bank of the Taunton River about two miles north of Battleship Cove in Fall River. The site was formerly an oil products terminal. The proposed new facility will be constructed within the industrially-zoned area, following clearance of the existing oil storage tanks.
- Location Benefits:** The location is ideally situated on a quiet stretch of water, near major highways, large enough to safely site a storage tank, and well positioned to access the gas pipeline grid.
- Project Attributes:** The facilities' design, operations and maintenance are highly regulated to ensure the public, property and the environment are fully protected.
- The facility will pay significant property taxes while placing little burden on the community's infrastructure.
 - The industry enjoys an unmatched safety and environmental track record.
 - The facility will be constructed utilizing proven technical designs.
 - Weaver's Cove Energy will employ the highest standards of safety, operation and maintenance as well as sensitivity to community issues.
 - Employment opportunities during construction and operation will be targeted to the local community.
- Project Contacts:** For further information contact:
James Grasso or Judith Iwanski - The Grasso Group, LLC - (781) 453-0226



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Massachusetts Watershed Initiative

JANE SWIFT
GOVERNOR

BOB DURAND
SECRETARY

TAUNTON RIVER WATERSHED
Patrick E. Rogers, Team Leader
Phone No. (508) 946 - 2836
Fax No. (508) 947 - 6557
Email: Patrick.Rogers@state.ma.us

February 15, 2002

Mr. Bill Napolitano, SRPEDD
88 Broadway Street
Taunton, Mass. 02780

Re: Lower Taunton River Committee
Proposed Wild and Scenic Study

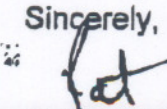
Dear Mr. Napolitano:

As you are aware, the upper Taunton River is presently being evaluated by a group of citizens, appointed by the towns of Bridgewater, Halifax, Middleborough, Raynham and the City of Taunton for possible inclusion in the United States - Department of the Interior - National Park Service Wild and Scenic Rivers Program.

As a resident of a lower Taunton River community, you have expressed interest in joining a committee that will explore the opportunities of identifying and working towards preserving the natural beauty of the lower Taunton River. I ask that you join in a kickoff meeting for the Lower Taunton River Committee to discuss future goals. It is anticipated that this Committee will conduct at least four (4) meetings to establish priorities to advance the possibility of the United States - Department of the Interior, through their National Park Service providing funding of a Wild and Scenic Study.

The date and place of the meeting is March 14, 2002 - thursday night at Dighton Town Hall from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. Dighton Town Hall is located on Route 138. I thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (508) 946 - 2836.

Sincerely,


Patrick E. Rogers, Watershed Leader
Taunton River Watershed

CC: Dighton Board of Selectmen
Berkley Board of Selectmen
Raynham Board of Selectmen
Taunton Mayor's Office
Somerset Board of Selectmen
Freetown Board of Selectmen

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs - Massachusetts Watershed Initiative
20 Riverside Drive, Lakeville, Massachusetts 02347



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Massachusetts Watershed Initiative**

**JANE SWIFT
GOVERNOR**

**BOB DURAND
SECRETARY**

TAUNTON RIVER WATERSHED
Patrick E. Rogers, Team Leader
Phone No. (508) 946 - 2836
Fax No. (508) 947 - 6557
Email: Patrick.Rogers@state.ma.us

September 6, 2002

**Congressman Barney Frank
United States Congress
69 Main Street
Bridgewater, Massachusetts 02324**

**Re: Lower Taunton River Wild and Scenic River Study
Taunton River Watershed**

Dear Congressman Frank:

As you are aware, some time ago, a coalition of community, non profit organizations and state planning and environmental agency officials got together to work towards preserving the lands and establishing a river corridor on the upper Taunton River. Through your efforts, along with others in our congressional delegation, legislation and funding of a Wild and Scenic Rivers Program study were approved through Congress and the United States Department of the Interior's - National Park Service. The 'upper study area' includes the first twenty two (22) miles of Taunton River, which include the Towns of Bridgewater, Halifax, Middleborough, and part of the Town of Raynham and the City of Taunton.

Again, as you are aware, communities on the 'lower' Taunton River were not included within the wild and scenic study area. The 'lower' Taunton River would consist of the rest of the City of Taunton and Town of Raynham and include Dighton, Berkley, Freetown, Somerset and the City of Fall River.

In response to comments from your office and representatives from the National Park Service, community leaders for the 'lower' Taunton River were contacted. The Board of Selectmen and Mayor's Offices chose representatives to meet and discuss the possibility of having a Wild and Scenic River Program study for the lower Taunton River.

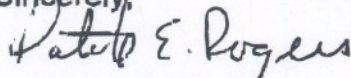
The community's have responded by signing a 'lower' Taunton River Resolution that affirms their commitment and support for a Wild and Scenic Rivers Program study to be conducted through the National Park Service. These signed resolutions are attached for your review.

The National Park Service has indicated that there may be a possibility of including funding for this study, in this year's upcoming federal budget (FY03). On behalf of these communities, I request that a letter be forward to:

Mr. Jamie Fosburgh, Rivers Program Manager
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Northeast Region
15 State Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02109

requesting that funding be appropriated for the purposes of conducting a Wild and Scenic Rivers Program study for the lower Taunton River communities. I thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (508) 946 - 2836.

Sincerely,



Patrick E. Rogers, Watershed Leader
Taunton River Watershed

cc: City of Taunton - Mayor Strojny
City of Fall River - Mayor Lambert
Town of Berkley - Board of Selectmen
Town of Dighton - Board of Selectmen
Town of Freetown - Board of Selectmen
Town of Raynham - Board of Selectmen
Town of Somerset - Board of Selectmen

2252 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2104
(202) 225-4931
29 CHAFIS STREET
SUITE 375
NEWTON, MA 02458
(617) 332-3920

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

September 12, 2002

ROOM 309
NEW BEDFORD, MA 02740
(508) 999-6462
222 MILLIKEN PLACE
THIRD FLOOR
FALL RIVER, MA 02721
(508) 674-3551
99 MAIN STREET
BRIDGEWATER, MA 02324
(508) 697-3403


Mr. Jamie Fosburgh, Rivers Program Manager
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Northeast Region
15 State Street
Boston, MA 02109

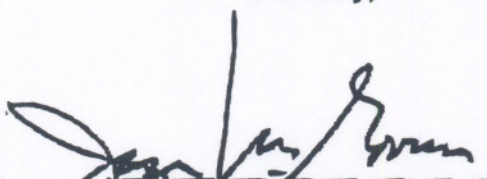
Dear Mr. Fosburgh,

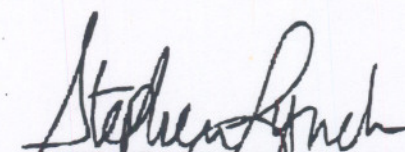
We are writing to support the request of the Massachusetts Watershed Initiative and communities of Taunton, Fall River, Berkeley, Dighton, Freetown, Raynham and Somerset to fund a study under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Program that would include the lower Taunton River. As you know, Congress has already funded a study of the upper Taunton River through the National Park Service's Wild and Scenic Program. Extending the study to the lower portion of this "Great River" provides a wonderful opportunity to illustrate its natural beauty and quantify its environmental significance to this ongoing project.

Enclosed please find a letter from Watershed Leader Patrick Rogers and subsequent Resolutions of Support from all the aforementioned communities that share this resource. Again, we urge the National Park Service to fund this study and remain confident that this river will one day be designated within the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Sincerely,


REP. BARNEY FRANK


REP. JAMES MCGOVERN


REP. STEPHEN LYNCH